



MINUTES
28 OCTOBER 2020
HOE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM – Via Zoom due to Covid-19

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from Dave and Pam Ward, Paul McCoy and Joan Jackson.

Penny Tarrant (PT) welcomed members to this meeting of HNF (via Zoom), including Ward Councillor Chris Penberthy (CP) and Caroline Fiske (CF) and Liz Cole (LC) from Plymouth City Council, Natural Infrastructure Department.

2. Minutes of previous meeting.

PT advised that a hand over had been completed from the outgoing Treasurer, Joan Jackson, to the incoming Treasurer, Gail Mallard.

PT advised that she had not been successful so far in finding a police officer to attend occasional HNF meetings.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as correct by proposer Martin Worrall and seconded by Kim Stevenson.

3. Councillors Report (CP)

CP opened his report by stressing the importance of everyone following the guidelines to prevent Covid-19 increasing further. Currently the city is facing greatly increasing numbers of cases, and may be forced to go to Tier 2 restrictions. There will unfortunately be no Fireworks in November, and no public commemoration on Remembrance Sunday or 11th November. There will be alternative commemoration, on local TV and provided by the British Legion. Details will be available shortly.

Covid-19 is now the top priority again, and PCC is back on an emergency footing.

CP encouraged members and residents to report any licensing issues. The stronger the case that is built against those breaking licensing rules, the more likely that PCC can act, and review the licence.

Similarly, CP encouraged residents to report any parking issues around the Peirson House development, whether it is concerning parking on double yellow lines, or in regard to parking permits. When reporting these, CP recommends copying him in, so that he is aware of the situation. Here's the link:- <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/parkingandtravel/reportparkingissue>

4. Planning Report (Martin Worrall, MW)

Please find the planning report attached.

CP informed the meeting that The Duke of Cornwall now owns the land that The Mount Pleasant pub is built on, which may avoid a high-rise hotel being built on that site.

PT asked whether HNF are able to comment on Pre-Planning Apps. CP said that some are confidential for various reasons, e.g. MoD works, but that PCC tries to alert people to the fact that there may be applications under consideration. MW asked whether HNF, if a Pre-Planning App is made public, can comment. CP said they could not do so to all of these. HNF would like to be included before actual Planning Apps are made. CP advised that a Pre-Planning App is a moving thing, and often does not go forward in its early form. CP said that he attempted to engage with any Pre Apps if they are likely to be controversial. PCC can request that it is made public, but developers are able to decline.

5. Neighbourhood Plan (Hilary Kolinsky)

HK told the meeting that the sub-groups have met, and checked at what stage the Neighbourhood Plan is at. Currently, our first policies are being re-drafted. Next steps will be to meet across the sub-groups, to review and check consistency and agreement. This will then go to wider consultation in the neighbourhood and beyond.

6. Register Office Feasibility Study (PT, Jackie Clift, HK, Graham Lobb GL and Graham Devine GD)

PT told the meeting that when there are consultations with the wider community, members will be informed. Anyone who would like to help with a Housing Working group reviewing the Housing Needs Assessment report we commissioned is welcome – the more help the better.

GL updated the meeting on his work with GD on this Study.

GL said that there had been a good response to the recent consultation leaflet. This has been analysed and the comments noted. These have been positive, and can be included in the framework. The study is running in

parallel with the work that HK is doing. The second Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) draft has just been received. It is apparent that there is a strong need for housing, but no desire for a hotel. A major step is to engage with the PCC and work out what is deliverable and what is good for the neighbourhood and the City as a whole. It is very unlikely to be possible to have a hotel and housing on the site. Currently the area has a large proportion of transient dwellers. Houses are available for families and others, but they are being broken down into flats. There is a need for elder housing and for young (under 40) housing. There's a need for more social housing, as young people are struggling to get on the housing ladder as the cost is higher than local wages allow.

GL advised that there is a range to consider, to formulate a proposal. They are still at the information collection stage, but that the information is solid. The constraints of the site will be considered and a housing specialist will need to be brought in to advise on how to deliver and how to fund the development. Currently, it has got to a stage where an outline document can be put to PCC as a Pre-Application plan.

It's too early for a design discussion, but the constraints of parking, trees etc can be outlined, and a meeting to find common ground between HNF and PCC can be sought. The study will endeavour to keep the plan in context with the locality, embracing green technology, and not too many storeys.

GL commented that the current Planning White Paper expected to be approved in spring 2021 may have influence.

BS asked what the time frame is looking like. GL said that the first Pre-App form would be ready in a few days, and an agenda could be opened on what to discuss with Planning and PCC.

CP advised that the sooner the Pre-App can be submitted and things moved forward the better, as there has been interest and there is interest from private developers to build on the site. While so far this has been rejected, time is running out as there are serious financial pressures on the City. CP advised not to be too open-ended. CP commented that PCC may be forced to make a decision in the next 3 months.

PT stated that HK, JC and herself had put in a very large number of hours to co-ordinate and collate the consultation feedback, and was presented with some 60-70 page long reports that needed consideration, including the new consultation on planning changes.

PT thanked CP for his advice, and asked him to continue to provide guidelines. She acknowledged the council's need to move forward with this site and will prioritise efforts.

CP said that there are costs to keeping the Register Building standing empty. These are focussing attention and there is a need for a decision on what will be done with the site. The financial situation has changed in the last 2 years.

PT thanked GL and GD for their briefing.

7. Park Matters and Mayflower400 (CF and LC)

PT introduced CF and LC and noted that regular meetings take place to update and discuss work and projects around the Hoe.

CF advised the meeting that there had been major plans for celebrating Mayflower400, but as everyone knows, this had not been possible. However, PCC had been allowed to keep the monies provided for improvements related to this around The Hoe, and had achieved many including: 280 railings painted, 10 bench seats refurbished, street furniture painted, 250m new tarmac in Citadel Rd, footpaths mended, and the tennis courts at West Hoe refurbished, and new play equipment ordered. Tenders for improvements to West Hoe Park have gone out, and for improvements to paving at the rear of the Bowling Green.

Further projects include improvements to the Peace Garden, cleaning the Ark Royal anchor and planting trees at sites on the Hoe.

There are also hopes to introduce a Hoe Gardening Club for volunteers.

LC briefed the meeting on two projects currently planned:

- A new 'Welcome to Plymouth' display to replace the old one below the Citadel, of a similar size. This is designed to be a long-term sustainable sign, visible from sea and air. The sign will be of slightly raised letters about 1m in length, and around it will be maritime sedum planting. As the site is within a Conservation Area, Historic England advice has been sought. Their recommendation is to use local stone rather than resin over stone. The project is expected to be completed through the winter. Dave Curno suggested contacting Plant Life, for a discussion on the plants to be used in the sedum.

Action: LC to send a visual image to PT

- Clock Garden. Previously, this had been a sponsored show garden, which is no longer possible due to financial constraints. The new project will be to provide a 4 season show, with a maritime Mayflower400 theme of plants from the 'old' and the 'new' world. There will also be a gate, to allow visitors to go into the garden and sit. A local landscape architect, James Brown, has been commissioned to complete this project, with the approval of Historic England and the PCC.

There will be public consultation, with an image near the Clock Garden and a QR code so that people can comment. Dave Curno suggested talking to Plant Life on this project too.

LC commented that she is waiting to get the local consultation questionnaire.

Action: PT to circulate the questionnaire, once available.

PT applauded PCC for using a local resource, but commented that it would be appreciated to be included at an earlier stage.

CP advised that the areas of most anti-social behaviour on the Hoe were in closed areas, like the Peace Garden, and recommended considering this regarding the Clock Garden.

CP said that the next set of interpretation boards would be being installed soon, new lighting, and a small monument in the Peace Garden to commemorate victims of the Slave Trade.

CF informed the meeting on the idea of a Gardening Club in the Hoe, with local volunteers. CF said that there are already some very successful and long term, gardening clubs in Plymouth, such as at Devonport Park. PCC would like to bring together some Hoe residents and some City Park gardeners. Tools would be provided to start with, and initially a small group of perhaps 3-4 residents (working within Covid-19 rules) would work with City gardeners for possibly up to half a day. These arrangements could change and increase in numbers in the future if there was sufficient interest and commitment. CF commented that other park volunteers valued the social aspect of this work, and also the opportunity to meet other gardeners, LC said that this was a smaller plan than originally hoped for, but has had to be scaled back due to Covid-19. This could be seen as a legacy project, one which will keep the Hoe looking attractive. Members should register their interest with PT.

Action: PT to send out more information, when available.

8. Response to Planning White Paper

PT thanked Jess Vaughan (JV), PCC Planning Officer, for agreeing to speak to the meeting.

JV gave a condensed overview of the White Paper and said that it was a list of proposals of the changes that the government want to make to planning. There are 24 proposals. These are intended to change everything that the government think is wrong and to streamline and speed up the whole process. This is a consultation paper and as such is sparse on detail and timescale.

JV advised that the response from PCC will be quite strong, and will be objecting to some parts of the paper. PCC is submitting representation as a Council.

This may have a significant impact on the Neighbourhood Plan, but the paper does suggest support and a positive approach to these plans. More funding will be available, but it is not clear how that will fit.

There are 3 pillars in the Paper:

Pillar 1 introduces new concepts, such as zoning and growth areas, centralisation, and digitalisation.

Pillar 2 is about 'Design and Beautiful Places' and Pillar 3 is about finance.

There is as yet no clear timetable.

PT advised that MW, HK and Louise Clements have read the paper and HK has sent a direct response and PT has sent a letter to our MP, Luke Pollard, and to Civic Voice. It appears that there is a lot to object to for NFs.

CP said that strong objection will be made, and this will be published.

Action: PT to share when available.

9. AOB

- DC advised the meeting that Heads of Terms had been agreed, for a long lease on the Dome. The venue to be re-branded, refurbished and brought back to use and run by a successful SW chain, with a theatre kitchen, bar, and play area. This is hoped to be ready by Easter 2021. CP said this would be announced as soon as possible.
- MW raised the issues of parking and community relations around Peirson House. CP advised that there is an ongoing dispute between the developers and PCC. CP repeated his request for those concerned to report any infringements such as parking on yellow lines on-line. Other issues such as removal of signage, bins in the wrong place etc can also be reported.
- PT informed the meeting that the 100 Years of Plymouth Powerful Women Trail project has come to completion – with great thanks to Kim Stevenson. The Trail will be loaded onto the website in the next 2 months.

Next Meeting

Next meeting will be on Wednesday 25 November at 19:00 – via Zoom.

There will be no meeting in December.